CATHERINE'S EMBASSY TO FLORENCE

Casentino, where Giovanni dalle Celle and others were. It is stated, rather questionably, that Niccolo Soderini accompanied them thither.

The new Signoria, which entered office on July I, with Luigi di Piero Guicciardini as Gonfaloniere of Justice, was judged by the people as composed of " peaceful and quiet men, who loved the repose of the city and their fellow-citizens." They entered upon their duties quietly, without the ringing of bells, the ceremony of installation being performed in the hall of council, instead of on the ringhiera. They at once ordered the citizens to lay down their arms, the contadini to leave the city on pain of death, the shops to be opened, the barricades pulled down, and every one to go about his business. "And the Signoria was obeyed in everything, and, in a very few days, it was all done. It seemed that there had never been any novelty in Florence, and every one commended the Signoria and the Colleges for the measures they had taken. The city passed every day from good to better, and it remained in repose and in quiet, without any murmuring, for ten days."[1] Under these circumstances, it seemed safe for Catherine and her company to return to Florence, where, says Fra Raimondo, she stayed at first secretly, " because of those who now held sway, who seemed to hate her exceedingly," but afterwards openly, waiting in ardent longing for the peace to be concluded between the Republic and the Church.

From Florence she now wrote her first letter to Pope Urban, whom, as we saw, she had known at Avignon, and with the harsher side of whose character she was probably already acquainted: " with desire of seeing you founded in true and perfect charity, in order that, like a good shepherd, you may lay down your life for your little sheep." She urges him to apply himself to the reformation of the Church. " Most holy Father, God has set you as shepherd over His little sheep of all the Christian religion ; He has set you as the cellarer to deal out the blood of Christ crucified, whose vicar you are ; and He has set you thus in a time in which iniquity abounds more than it

[1] Gmo Capponi (the elder), *op. cit.,* pp. 245-247.